

On the Application of

insufficient, of the absolute supremacy of God, of the total dependence of all mortal strength and effort on him, and of the necessity of maintaining habitually a devout respect to his intervention. It might promote that last attainment of a zealously good man, the resignation to be, as diminutive and as imperfectly successful an agent as God pleases. I am assured also that, in a pious mind, the humiliating estimate of means and human sufficiency, and the consequent sinking down of all lofty expectations founded on them, will leave one single mean, and that far the best of all, to be held not only of undiminished but of more eminent value than ever was ascribed to it before. The most excellent of all human means must be that of which the effect is to obtain the exertion of divine power. The means which are to be employed in a direct immediate instrumentality toward the end, seem to bear such a measured proportion to their objects, as to assign and limit the probable effect. This regulated proportion exists no longer, and therefore the possible effects become too great for calculation, when *that* expedient is solemnly employed which is appointed as the mean of engaging the divine energy to act on the object. If the only means by which Jehoshaphat sought to overcome his superior enemy, had been his troops, horses, and arms, there would have been nearly an assignable proportion between these means and the end, and the probable result of the conflict would have been a matter of ordinary calculation. But when he said,—"Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are up unto thee," * he moved (if I may reverently express it so) another and an infinite force to invade the host of Moab and Ammon ; and the consequence displayed in their camp the difference between an irreligious leader, who could fight only with arms and on the level of the plain, and a pious one who could thus assault from Heaven. It may not, I own, be perfectly correct to cite, in illustration of the efficacy of prayer, the most memorable ancient examples. Nor is it needful, since the experience of devout and eminently rational men, in latter times, has supplied numerous striking instances of important advantages so connected in time and circumstance with prayer, that with good reason they regarded them as the

* In the authorized version, " Our eyes are upoa th.ee."* 2 Chroni-"les **xx.** is.